~~SECRET~~

EO 12958 3.3(b)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

STUDIES IN INTELLIGENCE

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: MAY 2007

CENTER FOR THE STUDY
OF INTELLIGENCE
REFERENCE COPY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

VOL. 21 No. 3

FALL 1977
TR-SINT 77-003

~~SECRET~~

№ 1361

Richard Skeffington Welch, CIA Chief of Station in Athens, was assassinated in Athens at about 10 p.m. on December 23, 1975, as he and his wife Kika were returning from a Christmas party given by the U.S. Ambassador. Three masked gunmen ambushed his car at the gate to the Chief of Station's residence, and Welch was fatally wounded by one bullet. His wife was unharmed, as was his chauffeur.

All who leave the Agency leave behind reflections in two mirrors—the recollection of friends and colleagues, and the immutable pages of the Official Personnel Folder. Two years after the death of Dick Welch, a lifelong friend undertakes to blend the two reflections.

DICK WELCH, 1929 - 1975

Christopher May

Dick Welch at his death became the highest-ranking CIA officer killed in the line of duty, and the first Chief of Station deliberately murdered in a political assassination. He had been COS in Athens only since mid-1975, had been promoted to GS-17 in November, and had celebrated his 46th birthday only nine days before he died. He would have completed 25 years of service with the Central Intelligence Agency in July, 1976.

President Ford wrote to Dick's widow:

> His dedicated service to his country and faultless contribution to United States foreign policy objectives throughout his career will never be forgotten. In your time of grief, you have the deep sympathy of a grateful American people and their President.

At the President's direction, Dick's body was flown to Washington by Air Force plane and he was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. The President and Secretary of State Kissinger attended the funeral service in the Fort Myer Chapel on January 6, 1976, along with Dick's widow, his father, his three children, his first wife, DCI William E. Colby, FBI Director Clarence Kelley, Senators Pell of Rhode Island and Mathias of Maryland, other government officials, colleagues of 25 years, and friends of 40 years.

Dick's coffin was carried from the Chapel to the gravesite on the same horse-drawn caisson that bore President John Kennedy's body in November 1963. He was buried next to the grave reserved for his father, retired Army Col. George Patrick Welch, who died four months later. Dick's tombstone carries the legend, "Central Intelligence Agency," the first time that a CIA officer has been so identified.

As the second anniversary of his death approached, Dick's assassins had not been apprehended. The Government of Greece immediately expressed a sense of deep shock at his death, and launched a massive investigation which continues. Some have expressed skepticism that the killers will ever be brought to justice, suggesting that their identities and motives could be an embarrassment to the Greeks, but information available to the Agency indicates that the Greek Government is indeed making a determined effort to solve the murder.

Within the Agency, DCI Colby and DDO William Nelson paid tribute to Dick Welch at a memorial service held in the Headquarters auditorium on December 31, 1975. Dick's sons, Lt. Timothy Welch, USMC, and Nicholas Welch, represented the family, and Director Designate George Bush and DDCI Lt. Gen. Vernon A. Walters were among those who attended.

Bill Nelson spoke first, of

"a very special man . . . and extraordinary officer. We mourn his death with particular poignancy at this time, because he was representative of the best of the Clandestine Service. He was a brilliant scholar, a witty and delightful friend, and above all, a dedicated and accomplished professional. . . . If Dick Welch's senseless and tragic death serves any purpose, it is to symbolize in his life and work the loyalty, dedication, and decency of the men and women of the Clandestine Service. Perhaps in some small way, too, his death may help to bring an end, at least in America, to public toleration of malicious and distorted attacks on the Agency and the service, and the identification and exposure of our personnel abroad. . . .

Bill Colby spoke of long-term lessons reflected in Dick's death, and in his life:

First, I think we learn the importance of scholarship. This *magna cum laude* from Harvard, this careful student of languages, this man with great understanding of foreign peoples, great ability to relate to the high and the low—this is a part of the intelligence profession.

We learn the value of commitment to action, living abroad, working among difficult circumstances. . . . We learn of a man who is committed to service to his country and service to the intelligence profession. . . . We learn

achievement. . . . We learn leadership, because he exemplified this in his career and in his activities. He showed leadership to his Station personnel . . . so that his stations were always models of production along the really difficult line of the clandestine work necessary for our country. . . . His performance . . . showed that he could not only lead people in CIA, he could also have an enormous impact on the people outside it, articulating what intelligence is all about, what it can do, its importance to our country, and how good it really is. . . .

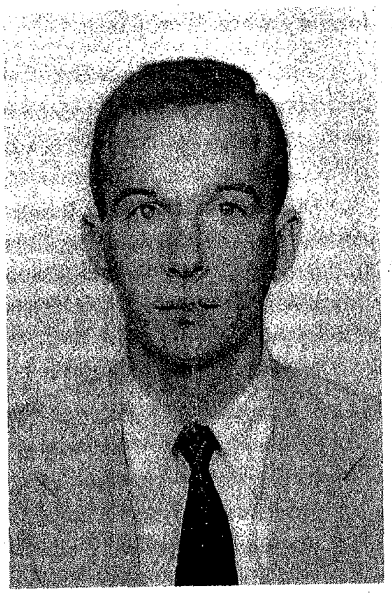
I think we must also learn from his death, cut down by these terrorists. . . . We learn that our profession has risks. . . . We learn the need for professionalism in our operations, for the importance of real cover, of real secrecy in our operations. . . .

But we also need to learn from his death how important it is that all Americans be responsible about intelligence as we must be responsible about our country. . . . So, I think, we can say then at this sad occasion that as we look over Dick Welch's life and his death, we must take from it a resolution and renewed strength to learn the lessons of his life and his death and apply these lessons in the future of this Agency that he served so well and so effectively.

We wish that this had not happened, but we are convinced that in the future his name will truly mark a turn in the intelligence system of America in which we responsible professionals and we responsible Americans continue the kind of intelligence service that he looked forward to. . . .

The death of Richard Skeffington Welch ended a connection with the Central Intelligence Agency which had begun just weeks short of 25 years earlier. "Dear Mr. Cunningham," he wrote to a CIA recruiter on February 8, 1951, "I am a senior at Harvard and have majored in Near Eastern History and Greek. Because of my interest in such subjects, I believe myself qualified, as much as I can determine, to apply to the CIA for a position. . . ."

Dick Welch was 21 at the time. He was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1929, the youngest of three children of a retiring mother and an energetic father who gave up Wall Street after the crash of 1929 to write inflammatory Irish novels, Dick grew up in Providence, Rhode Island, where he graduated from Classical High School after studying Greek for three years and Latin for four. At Harvard, he ran on the cross-country and track teams, developed a formidable prowess at the pool table, honed his chess game, and began a lifelong love affair with classical music. As a junior, he almost died of peritonitis following appendicitis. His field of concentration was Greek History and Literature.



His interest in foreign affairs came early, inspired by his father to whom he was devoted but of whom he saw relatively little because of his parents' divorce in the mid-1930s. The attractiveness of government service as a career presented itself to him with peculiar force as a college senior, in the bitter first winter of the

Korean War. His father, who had become a career Army officer at World War II, led an Army battalion to the hard fighting at the Chosin Reservoir and back safely. Dick's own opportunity for military service had been precluded by the loss in childhood of the sight of one eye—a loss which went undetected by many who fell victim to his tenacious but canny tennis game in later years. A friend passed him a recruiting letter from the Central Intelligence Agency, an organization little talked of and less understood in Cambridge at that time.

Following his application letter of February 8, Welch talked in March and April with CIA recruiters who reported:

> . . . claims he would work out well in a job demanding reportorial skills . . . solid, well-dressed, stable-appearing young man of above average intellectual talents. . . . Smart boy . . . good serious motivation. . . . Considerable potential because of fine college record, natural enthusiasm, and intensity of interest. . . . Pleasing personality."

A background investigation ensued; its report stated:

> Is described as a brilliant scholar in the field of Greek History and Literature. . . . Good character and good moral habits, well mannered, goodlooking, and loyal. Is recommended without reservation by all informants.

Welch was invited to accept employment, and entered on duty on July 29, 1951, six weeks after graduating from Harvard. He was delighted, and however critical he was of the Agency's performance or decisions in later years, Dick Welch never wavered in his conviction that he had made the right career decision, and that success for the Agency was essential to the well-being of the United States.

The early months in Washington were socially absorbing and professionally inauspicious. Dick was quickly selected for assignment to Athens, and he was eager to leave, but first there was training to be undergone in the creaky old tempos along the Potomac. He was not enthusiastic about the unreality, and his training evaluations were not distinguished. In one Basic Operations Course in December, for example, he earned grades of "Excellent" in Intelligence Requirements and Reporting of Information; "Superior" in Communism and the USSR; and "Satisfactory" in Mapping; but for Security and Interviewing, he was rated "Poor." Grades in another basic course in January were even worse.

There were extenuating circumstances. Dick had married his first wife, Patty, in mid-December, money was scarce, and he knew the real job was to be done in the field, not in Tempos T-30 and T-31. He left for Athens with alacrity in February, 1952.

Dick loved Greece. It was everthing he had hoped and read that it would be. He worked hard to convert his knowledge of classical Greek into professionally-useful modern Greek, and in time developed a facility which matched that of the Station's Greek-Americans and astonished the native Greeks.* He sailed into the Station's activity with a verve which his older, more experienced colleagues considered brash, and with attitudes toward them which they considered impudent.

But the opportunities for useful professional work were manifold as Greece struggled in 1952 to curb the threat of the Communist Party. The political and strategic stakes were high; the USSR was a looming presence just beyond the edge of the Mediterranean. Dick learned rapidly, guided by wise counsel. In October 1954, his

*More than 20 years later, Steven B. Roberts wrote from Athens for the *New York Times* on Dec. 25, 1975: "At a recent party, a woman told Welch that he was supposedly the second-best speaker of Greek in the American Embassy. 'Excuse me,' he replied, 'I am not the second best. I am the best.' "

fitness report reflected ratings of "Outstanding" in 20 of 50 categories (the forms were more complex in those days), "Above Average" in another 24, and none below "Reasonable Degree." His outstanding strengths:

> alert, intelligent mind bolstered by a wide range of knowledge. Incisive, analytical thinker with excellent ability to express his ideas orally and in writing. Natural bent and interest in political and press matters. Excellent knowledge of the Greek language and scene. . . . A fine performance.

Dick stayed in Athens for three rich tours in all. The high point probably came in 1956, with the elevation of Constantin Karamanlis to the prime ministry, "The Government of the Five Roads," and the small touches that assisted the process: for example, [redacted] the celebration of the seventh anniversary of the victory over the Communists in the Civil War, with the Cathedral as the setting—the first six anniversaries had passed with no noticeable interest shown [redacted] Dick's fitness reports continued laudatory:

> Unusually strong person in terms of the requirements of the organizaion. . . . Outstanding Weakness: slightly impatient. (December 1955.)
>
> Has the potential to reach the executive level; outstanding knowledge of the area, language, customs. . . . Though slightly excitable, has shown during the past two years marked improvement in this respect. (December 1956.)
>
> Inspired in his approach to his tasks. He made tremendous progress during the past three years and shows he is of high calibre for the future. . . . He has the intelligence, drive, and devotion to his work which seem to assure his rise to the executive level. (April 1957, when Welch's only ratings of "Average" came on "can get along with people" and "is thoughtful of others.")
>
> He has acquired valuable and vast experience in the [redacted] and has shown initiative, decisiveness, and deliberation in facing problems as they arise. His reporting and analysis are of excellent quality. . . . Outstanding young man with a geat deal of potential. . . . Excellent performance, taken in conjunction with the brilliant qualities inherent in Subject, and his clear-cut motivation to continue his work taken together with his ambition to advance to higher levels of responsibility, speak in the best terms about Subject's potential. (April 1958.)

When Dick left Athens in October 1958, the Chief of Station wrote:

> His work has constantly been characterized by great vigor and encyclopedic knowledge of the local Greek political scene. His mental processes are logical and very well organized. He is highly persuasive and writes clearly and well. He is likely to be a sparkplug in any group of which he is a part. He has a particular flair for [redacted] and I recommend that he be groomed for increasingly senior responsibilities in this field. Should he err, it is likely to be on the side of aggressive, positive action or counsel rather than to the contrary. He is an assiduous and selective reader and is continually seeking new professional knowledge.

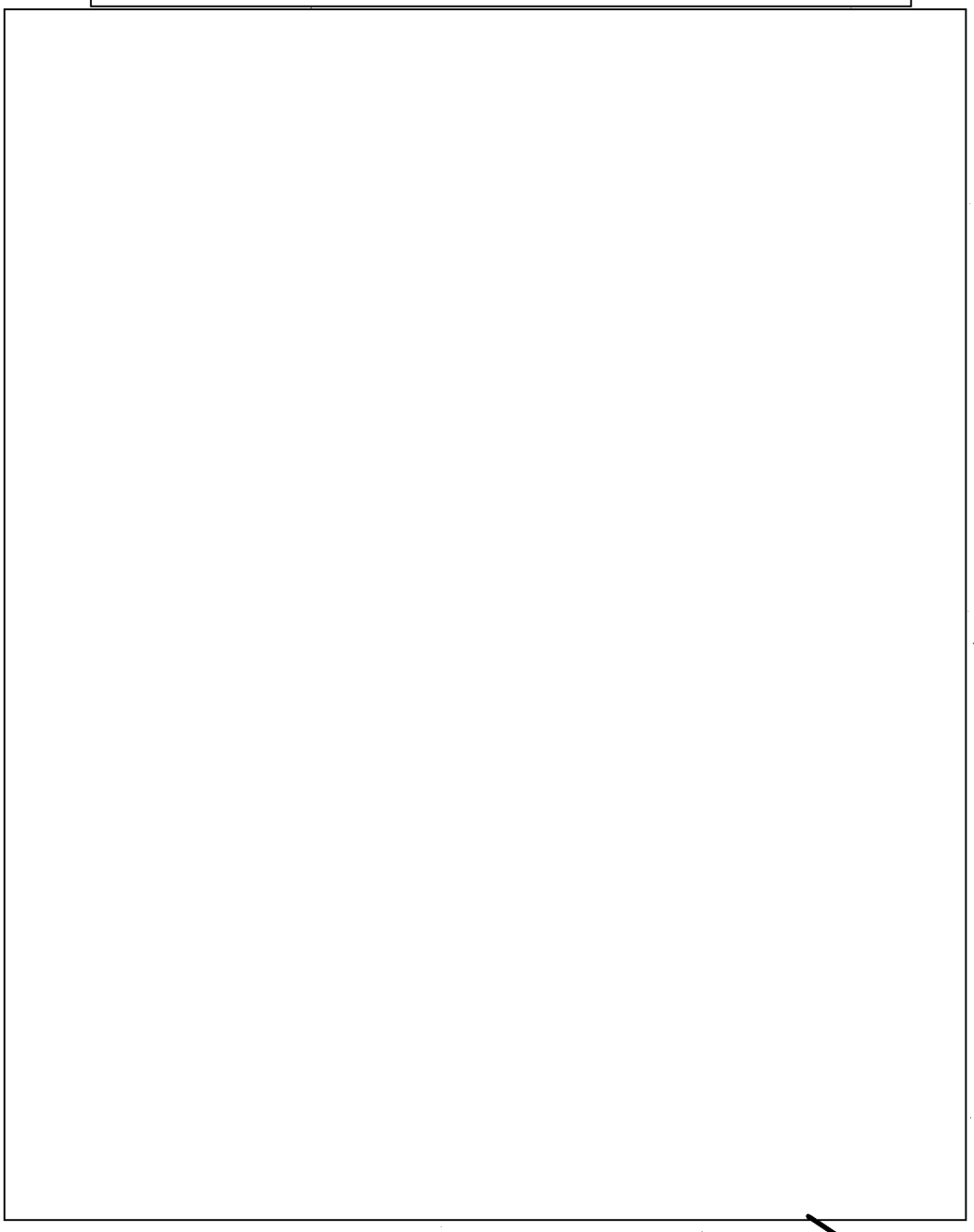
His apprenticeship was over, and it had been an unusual success. He had advanced from GS-5 to GS-12 in seven years. The brashness was tempered, the strengths were identified, the foundations were laid for a brilliant future. Headquarters was to be endured only long enough to arrange to get back to the field.

In Washington he joined the Turkish Branch, then, as was Greece, a part of the old Southeast Europe Division. He was the deputy, but the chief soon left on other

business and Welch ran the branch for about 18 months. Taking on the Turks as clients gave balance to his Greek view of the Eastern Mediterranean. His stewardship was sure-handed, although a rash of security violations at one point threatened suspension. His overall ratings were "Outstanding," with his writing and his judgment drawing particular compliments, and a note of caution on "glib answers."

> His greatest weakness, and one which could hurt him in the pursuit of what could be a magnificent career in the Agency, is a propensity for talking down to senior—and probably more experienced—officers, who are frequently at least his intellectual if not his vocal equals.

The reviewer—possibly one who had been talked down to—confirmed the "Outstanding" ratings but noted the "serious potential weaknesses which are pointed out."



Dick returned to a new situation at Headquarters. His old SE Division was no more, having been dissolved several years before and merged half into Eastern Europe, half into Near East. He declined an invitation to join the effort in Teutonic Europe, feeling that its Wagnerian irrationality and brooding weather was no place for a child of Aristotelian logic and Mediterranean sunshine. Instead he asked to be transferred to the Western Hemisphere Division and made a 10-year commitment to Latin America. He made no secret of his desire to return some day to Athens, but he wanted to immerse himself in a different area of the world. Nor did he look for a quiet spot, but sought again for areas of some conflict and uncertain governments, and stakes important enough to try to influence and hold in America's interest. He never regretted his decision, and he stayed in Latin American affairs, indeed, for the promised 10 years.

At Headquarters, Dick stepped in as deputy chief of a busy branch, worked hard and perceptively, studied Spanish. He and Patty formally separated and divorced, and sadly he sent the children with her to England, where she was pleased to live and his limited funds would suffice. Thereafter, he saw the children only when he could manage stops in England or could bring them to the New World on vacations until, in

the early 1970s, he could receive them in [redacted] for long visits. His peers and superiors in WH Division were skeptical of him at first, but quickly rated him highly, noting his "excellent supervisory abilities," his "ability to cope in the strongest and most professional fashion with the FI/CA problems," and the factor of being "unusually quick to grasp the realities and complexities of the political situation in five countries." Within 18 months, his immediate chief gave him

> the first overall "Outstanding" rating that this rater has ever given an officer. . . . Indeed one of the finest officers of any grade I have ever had the pleasure of working with . . . enthusiastic enjoyment of the intelligence business which is contagious. . . . An excellent supervisor, unusually perceptive in dealing with people. . . . Shows impatience with subordinates when they do not measure up to his standards or appear to be wasting his time and theirs. . . . Unique ability to quickly put his thought on paper in an organized fashion which, although at times overly stylistic, is always to the point, fresh, and expressive.

On one occasion, a Chief of Station thought to dispose of an animated exchange with the branch by ending a cable with a Latin quotation,

> forgetting that Dick had forgotten more Latin than he had ever known, so back flew our final word, and Dick appended a play on Henry's Latin quote, twisting the Latin so that it placed Henry right back on his heels. . . . He was so tickled and amused by the cable from Headquarters twisting his tail in Latin, that the little tiff was promptly forgotten.

The Division Chief was more restrained:

> . . . no doubt that Mr. Welch is a most promising officer. However, I am reluctant to concur in such very high ratings on the basis of his first year in the Division and before he has acquired WH field experience. Therefore I am not recommending any additional special recognition at this time. Nevertheless, I am confident that Mr. Welch has a bright future. . . .

In the summer of 1966, Dick went to Guatemala City [redacted] He loved the grace and beauty of Guatemala, [redacted] and in turn found himself impressed by the personal secretary of the Guatemalan Foreign Minister. [redacted] Dick married the lady, Señorita Maria Cristina "Kika" Hartleben of Guatemala City, McGill University, the Sorbonne, and Bonn. They almost lived happily ever after.

The assignment to [redacted] came, as the Division Chief quoted earlier wrote, to replace a man who had done a "superb job."

> Needed was a man of considerable intellectual accomplishment and a high order of political acumen, perception, and judgment who could solve problems, manipulate people, and act independently or as a team player as the situation might require. He had to be a diplomat, negotiator, horse trader, and agent handler *par excellence*. . . . Because Mr. Welch was known to possess the qualities mentioned above, and because he also has the physical and mental stamina to operate over a lengthy and indefinite period of time without a large staff to help him, he was selected. . . .

As Dick said, from the mountains and charming climate and Spanish of Guatemala, he went to a forgotten place six feet below sea level with oppressive heat and bad English.

His success, however, was spectacular within and discreet without. [redacted] He showed "patience for the hard job as well as the more exciting one." [redacted] Dick made GS-15, and formed an abiding friendship with a grateful ambassador. He left in triumph [redacted] In May 1969, DCI Richard Helms marked Dick's [redacted] tour by awarding him the Intelligence Medal of Merit, with a citation which noted:

> Placed in charge of a complex operational activity, Mr. Welch, by a rare demonstration of wisdom, fine judgment, and initiative, brought the activity to a successful conclusion, thereby securing results highly favorable to the policies of our government.

At home, Dick was scheduled to take over a WH branch, but he became the Division's FI chief instead. He introduced the United States to Kika, bought a house on Capitol Hill on good will and a shoestring, and plunged into the management of WH with characteristic zeal and prescience. His fitness report in March 1970 reflected his

> tact in dealing with strong-minded branch chiefs with firmness, good humor, and the force to get his points across . . . markedly devoted to doing the job well, impatient with shoddy or mediocre performance; creative, very good judgment and common sense. His overenthusiasm for a particular idea or project or operation leads him occasionally to suspend his critical faculty . . . [but] he doesn't let his feelings get in the way. . . . Treats his subordinates well. . . . May be a bit impatient with those who don't think or move as fast as he does. . . . Shows a marked concern for those who need help and understanding. . . . Unlimited potential in the Agency.

He later won ratings of "Outstanding" in the FI post:

> His horizons are unlimited. . . . He is ambitious, but his ambitions are buttressed by uncommon dedication, ability, and integrity. Further, he is extremely perceptive and able in the human relations field. It's a pleasure, even in rare disagreement, to do business with him, even though he does keep you on your mental toes. . . . He has endurance . . . good antennae for the potential problem . . . and in a positive sense, the need for change and innovation. . . . Imaginative and not easily dissuaded by inertia or obstacles once committed to a concept or course of action.

Dick served briefly as Acting Deputy Division Chief, WH, and then prepared to take over as [redacted]

Ironically, in the light of his subsequent death, one of Dick's major efforts in the WH Division, as noted in a March 1971 fitness report, was

> a comprehensive study on the terrorist problem in the hemisphere—something which is becoming endemic and is one of the most difficult problems with which we now are faced and will have to cope with for the indeterminate future. The study covered terrorist *modus operandi*, defensive measures (physical, cover, etc.), and many other ramifications. Ultimately it was distributed by DD/P to other divisions, led to special training

courses . . . on certain defense measures, has been used by security officialdom in the Department of State as a basis for much of its approach to the same problems, put Technical Services Division into such fields as car armoring and other countermeausres, and has been used to respond to liaison requests for assistance in countries where terrorism is a particularly vexing problem. . . .

With a prescience that was reasonable and only now seems eerie, Dick predicted that some day a senior CIA officer might be a terrorist's target.

The years [redacted] from 1972 to 1975 were Dick's vintage years, although happily no one could know that at the time. Kika was delighted to be back in Latin America. Dick's father, whom he revered and cherished, recovered from a serious operation and came to live with them. The house was majestic, and a constant delight. Dick's children came for long visits. [redacted] The tennis was good, the city and the people were charming. The operating climate was cool and stimulating, and its possibilities—with all the principal target countries represented—were limited only by time, prudence, and manpower. [redacted] Dick's planning was thorough and careful. He demanded much as a supervisor, but he held the admiration of his subordinates. By now he was rated the Latin American Division's top Chief of Station, and although he had his critics, few were envious. One tough-minded superior wrote admiringly of his

> boundless energy, enthusiasm, and imagination . . . particularly adroit and perceptive in spotting the weaknesses and the danger spots in planned or ongoing operations, and in recommending effective remedial action on a timely basis . . . perception to identify the problem, and the wisdom to solve it. . . . In considering the personal characteristics and qualifications required of supergrade officers, there are no points in which he shows up deficient and in fact, judging by his current performance in the field, he appears to satisfy these requirements to an exceptional degree.

And his Division Chief at this time, a special friend, wrote:

> He is an exceptional officer, manager, operator, and person. He is as ambitious as any man I know, and it doesn't hurt a bit; his infectious good humor and relaxed self-confidence is soothing rather than taxing. He is erudite without being a pain; he is energetic without being frenetic; he operates smoothly without creating suspicions of his motives; he is, in short, the Complete Station Chief.

His Ambassador commented warmly in the spring of 1975:

> He has consistently turned in excellent performances of his assigned duties, and I have found him invariably to be well-informed on the entire field of [redacted] political and related security issues . . . thoroughly loyal and cooperative in all matters where we have had joint areas of mutual interest. . . . He has kept me well-informed on day-to-day developments . . . excellent quality of contact work and reporting of events on the [redacted] scene . . . thoroughly objective . . . and I likewise have been pleased to have his well-considered and stoutly-defensed recommendations on policy matters—whether or not we have agreed on those recommendations . . .

never seems to lose his wit, sharp sense of humor, and tough-minded analytical ability even under conditions of stress, suprise, or adversity . . . has developed an excellent team of intelligence analysts who have covered their designated targets well and without incident in this difficult political environment. . . .

While in [redacted] Dick was fortunate to have with one of his agents one of those friendships of admiration, complete trust, sympathy, and compatibility that men sometimes form, a friendship which provided him not just with a good tennis partner and guide to [redacted] but also with invaluable insights and introductions to professionally important matters as well. This friend reminisced on tape shortly after Dick was killed:

> Richard was such a polished, such an all-around man, and he spoke such a quaint brand of Spanish, that he fitted in extremely well with all my friends. . . . I do not recall a single instance where anybody ever so much as hinted that there could be anything but spontaneous sympathy between us. . . . I was able to introduce him to a number of . . . what you might describe as broad spectrum figures in this country, and invariably he got off on a personal magnetism basis. . . . Wherever he went, he had this great facility for engaging in very cordial treatment of people.
>
> Richard was endowed by nature with a very, very harmless aspect. . . . Somehow or other, Richard's work was not associated with hanging around [tennis club] lockers with all kinds of young and middle-aged people, and talking amiable nonsense and drinking beer. . . . Without actually leaking anything, he would show great flexibility, implying or supporting knowledgeably people's opinions. This, as always happens with Latins, would lead them on in many cases to extremes of frankness, and this in turn would give us the basis or the groundwork for reopening a subject at a later date.
>
> I have never met a man with the incredible insight, with the ability to get to the bottom of the subject matter. He would automatically tabulate the qualifications and the veracity, let's say the quality of the source. He had an index mind. . . . We used to rate our friends and my sources by their degree of accuracy. . . .
>
> I have always been a little upset by the incredible candor of Anglo-Saxons, particularly US citizens. Their Hollywood scale of values, probably derived from Westerns—guys are good or bad, there are no greys, no in-betweens. . . . Richard was a master at greys and inbetweens. In fact, in Richard's books there were no blacks and no whites. . . . Richard didn't believe there was anybody all bad, or anybody all good, I guess.
>
> But he did have a fantastic facility for pushing his finger straight through some of my bull—bull that was part wishful thinking, and part freshman enthusiasm. He could somehow always tell when I was talking off the cuff and when I had something substantial. . . .
>
> Richard would tell me that . . . he welcomed my fantasy, because he believed a lot in intuitive coloring of information. And some of my fantasy was actually subliminal or intuitive thinking that had been oriented by a number of other little things I may have picked up unconsciously that gave my thinking a certain bearing, and that is the bearing that he would qualify, too, in my own way, although he knew that it was part baloney. . . . It is one of the finer points in the exchanging of information and the evaluation of

information. . . . [Richard told] me that I have an intuitive quality which is very valuable, and which cannot be learned, and that he felt that this intuitive factor made me very valuable to him, because it cut through a lot of leg work that he would normally have had to carry out. . . .

He never made me feel in any way that I was . . . out of line when I made a mistake. . . . Some of the assignments he came up with were really hairy. Frequently there was no time, or we had a tremendous deadline to meet. And then, of course, as these things happen, after you bust your butt on a certain line of action [it] isn't necessary. He was always very thoughtful in this regard; he would always cut a line or an item short as soon as he could. I imagine he was as keen as anyone to save wasted effort. . . .

Richard was the first case where someone from the States was perceptive to my theory of the reading between the lines. . . .

When talking about where they would like to go if they were ever transferred, Richard mentioned that his first love was Greece; that to him, Greece was everything that was not material, everything that was pleasurable and spiritual and rewarding. . . . Strangely enough, he said no, he wouldn't care to retire there, but he would try to go there every year. . . . Greece was terribly important to him. And in the two or three letters I received from him before we lost him, he kept telling us how important and how much he felt a part of the Greek scene and the nation. . . .

I remember asking him if there was any danger, any possibility that violence should reach the Embassy level, or at least the US representation there. He was very level-headed about it, very matter-of-fact. He said there was violence all over the world. If it's Greece, why not in Greece? He did say something about believing that if there was a place to go, Greece is as good a place as any. . . . We didn't give this too much importance, but there was definitely some talk; there could have been a premonition, who knows?

In matters of life and death, Richard was extremely impersonal, particularly where line of duty was concerned. Nevertheless . . . when things got very sticky here, he called me one day and he thought I should get out or get disengaged because if I was in any way incriminated or involved in his particular activity, my welfare and that of my family would be jeopardized, or positively harmed. We laid low for a while and then things straightened themselves out. But I do recall that he showed great concern over me. . . . I seemed to be less worried at the time than he was. . . .

. . . . My son's description of Richard is very graphic: *Fuera de serie.* In Spanish it is an expression for fine equipment. It is ahead of the term custom-made. . . . It is a little closer to the old term "hand-crafted." That's how my son describes Richard Welch, and we all agree with him.

Dick had always counted on being able to return to Athens some day as Chief of Station. His own plan was to arrive at about age 50, then perhaps to finish his Agency career there. Although he was not falsely modest when a friend suggested he should aspire to the DDO's chair—and he surely did so aspire—Athens would have been a pleasurable and satisfactory cap to his career. The call came rather sooner than he had expected, at age 45. Although reluctant to leave [redacted] he was delighted to accept. There was an extra spring to his step and a special gleam in his eye as he went

deliberately about his preparations at Headquarters in May 1975. On the day before he left for Athens, he had the special joy of attending son Tim's graduation ceremonies from Marine Officer Candidate School at Quantico, and there was a happy evening at the Kennedy Center and afterward in Georgetown; the play was "Present Laughter."

Going back to Athens was like going home, Dick told friends. Greece had changed, but so had he. He plunged into the job and the life with a characteristic mixture of enthusiasm and care. He was very busy. He and Kika and his father settled into the grand house of the Chief of Station. Dick's younger children Nicholas and Molly came and stayed for months. He and they truly became acquainted for the first time in years, and all were delighted. There were legions of friends old and new, and there was a boat. There was too little time for some things; Kika, for example, never visited the Acropolis. And although he talked about it, Dick temporized on a change of residence which might permit more discreet living than the Chief's well-blown house afforded.

But there was the one exception to the mixture of enthusiasm and caution: Dick had been very careful about personal security while in Latin America, but he refused to take precautions in Athens. Where in [redacted] he would tour the block and call the Embassy or the police for help if the ever-buring house lights were out for some unknown reason, in Athens he felt supremely confident and safe. Kika was worried, but could persuade Dick of nothing. Even after his name was prominently played in the local Athens English-language daily as one of the CIA's local officers, he brushed aside her urgings of caution. After he died, she could remember that she had seen people sitting in cars near the house at odd times of the day and warned Dick about them. With two Communist embassies in the neighborhood, Dick found nothing to disturb him in this.

After Dick's death, his special [redacted] friend said:

> There is no question that he was one of the great men of the silent war, and he would have performed admirably in any other field of private or public life. . . . The Greeks have lost a great friend, and the United States and all his friends have lost a great man.

Grieving Kika said what so many felt: "Such a waste." Dave Phillips called Dick "a civilized man;" no accolade suited Dick better, or would have pleased him more.

John Horton wrote:

> No one of us who knew Dick at all could be untouched by him. He set us a good example in his honesty, his partisanship for good causes, his generous care for all of us—looking to the least, often, for examples of good work with which to remind us of our own obligations. What was especially painful about Dick's death, aside from personal and even selfish memories, is that he is not there to inspire the people coming up. He personified qualities of courage, honesty, love of his fellows, quick generosity, a feel for language which is not pedantry but a care for truth. His fun was a part of his warmth. He was not less serious for being able to joke. He was quick to spot the fallacy and never abandoned what he thought to be true.

George Constantinides remembers that, in moments of national doubt, Dick used to say: "I fear for the great Republic." But he also remembers that Dick drew on

Pericles' charge in his funeral oration of 431 B.C. for a tribute to an esteemed Chief of Station leaving Athens 25 years ago:

> . . . . Reflect that this city has been acquired by men who knew their duty and had the courage to do it. . . ."

Dick added: "This is what I believe in."

It is never easy to lose a friend and a colleague at the height of his powers and in the prime of his life. In Dick Welch's death, we of the CIA learned again what we always knew: it is hardest of all to lose the finest.